

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE 10

U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT  
29 April 1985

## Pentagon's Porous Security Shield

Some of the Soviet Union's most valuable spies walk right through the guarded gates of U.S. defense plants, lunch bucket and security pass in hand.

So said witness after witness as the Senate Permanent Investigations Subcommittee in mid-April probed the government's handling of security clearances.

Investigators—and some convicted spies—maintained that the system was in shambles, with clearances too easy to get and too easy to keep.

The problem was blamed in part on the sheer size of the task. Four million Americans—90 percent of them defense workers—hold clearances allowing access to classified projects. The Pentagon's backlog of unprocessed

applications: 280,000, with 26,000 new ones arriving each month.

Christopher Boyce, serving a 68-year prison term, sold secret documents from his employer, TRW, a Central Intelligence Agency contractor. Boyce said he got clearance because investigators never talked to his friends: "Had the investigators asked any of those friends what I

thought of the U.S. government, I would never have gotten the job."

William Holden Bell, a former Hughes Aircraft engineer convicted of espionage, told Senate investigators his clearance was 28 years old and was never updated when he began selling secrets. Bell said a recheck would have revealed that he had developed financial and personal problems.

FBI officials reported that Soviet spies are "more numerous, sophisticated and aggressive than ever before," and the backlog of espionage prosecutions is the largest since World War II.

Government officials said the problem could be eased—but not erased—with more money, more investigators and better agency coordination.

Yet experts noted that even the most rigorous security curtain can be breached at times. The FBI recently charged one of its own special agents with selling secrets to the Soviets. □



Boyce shows top-secret workplace where he stole secrets.